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Title: \$50,000 approved for Gateway RCD agri-tourism

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Writer:

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The Kentucky Agricultural Development Board approved \$50,000 in state funds for Gateway Resource Conservation Development as part of the 2006 Agri-tourism Competitive Awards Program. This proposal was one of the 28 projects, totaling \$2,985,271 approved at the April Agricultural Development Board Meeting.

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Gateway Resource and Conservation Development will use the \$50,000 in state funds to help farmers develop Eco/Agri-Tourism businesses on their farms. Seven counties including Wolfe, Menifee, Morgan, Elliott, Carter, Greenup and Lewis are collaborating to make a continuous agri-tourism trail from the Red River Gorge to the Ohio River.

This project will help replace the family income lost with the tobacco buy-out. Small family farmers of this region, through partnering with civic and governmental agencies, will establish innovative alternatives for income generation based on the natural resource assets of their farms and the region. By 2010 they want this area to be a nationally known natural resource/cultural-based tourism destination center.

This initiative grew out of a 2005 Kentucky Entrepreneurial Coaches Institute (KECI) mini-grant project chaired by Gwenda Adkins with involvement from Lynn Baker, Kay Boggs, Teresa Brown, Don Davis, Paula Franke and Anthony Lawson. 2006 KECI Fellow, Larry Brown is the current chair of this seven-county initiative.

The 2006 Agri-tourism Competitive Awards Program was designed to assist producers as they venture into Kentucky's emerging agri-tourism industry. In the competitive awards program the Board set aside one million (\$500,000 in each of two rounds awarded) in state funds for the development of agri-tourism businesses and for the promotion of agri-tourism by regional agri-tourism organizations. The deadline for round two of the competitive awards program is August 1, 2006.

The Kentucky Legislature continues to make great strides towards lessening Kentucky's

dependence on tobacco production while revitalizing the farm economy by investing 50 percent of Kentucky's Master Settlement Agreement into the Kentucky Agricultural Development Fund. Since the inception of the program in January 2001, the Agricultural Development Board has approved over 2,381 proposals committing over \$201 million to an array of county, regional, and state projects designed to increase net farm income and create sustainable new farm-based business enterprises.

For more information on this project contact Larry Brown with East KY Foothills Eco-Agri-tourism Corporation at 606-768-8190. To learn more about cost-share grant and loan programs available through the Agricultural Development Fund contact the Governor's Office of Agricultural Policy at 502-564-4627 or visit our website at <http://agpolicy.ky.gov>

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